

**Testimony of Jane Grant-Kels, M.D. for
The Connecticut Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society
Before the Public Health Committee
In Opposition to
HB1254 An Act Allowing Electrologists to use Laser Technology for Hair
Removal**

March 5 2007

Good Afternoon, Senator Handley, Representative Sayers and other distinguished members of this committee. For the record, my name is Jane Grant-Kels, I am a board certified dermatologist practicing in Farmington at the UCONN Health Center. I am here as a past president of the Connecticut Dermatology and Dermatologic Surgery Society , an organization representing over 95% of the dermatologists practicing in this state in strong opposition to HB1254.

Although laser hair removal has become one of the most common cosmetic procedures performed in the United States, second only to Botox injections in frequency, it should not be viewed as a "non-medical" procedure. In fact, Laser hair removal utilizes a beam of highly concentrated light designed to selectively penetrate the hair follicles and be absorbed by the hair pigment to destroy the root of the hair or hair bulb.. Unlike electrolysis, in which a needle is inserted into each hair follicle, destroying the follicles one at a time with electrical energy, lasers treat a much larger area of the skin and permanently destroy the hair follicles.

Many dangers exist for both the patient and the physician operating the laser if not used properly. The laser must be set with parameters which take into consideration the patient's skin color, the hair color, , the location of the hair and the amount of energy needed for the treatment. Before the actual procedure is performed a pulse of light is directed to the treatment area and is then observed for adverse reactions. Both the physician and the patient must use protective eyewear, to prevent the laser light from penetrating into the eyes, which could result in significant damage to the eye. Additional measures must be taken to

insure the protection of the outer layers of the skin, usually a cold gel is applied or a special cooling device is used.

Even when proper precautions are taken, complications can occur with laser hair removal, as with any laser treatment. The laser operator must be able to identify and treat these complications quickly and appropriately. It is not uncommon for pain and discomfort to occur with laser hair removal. Other adverse events, such as blisters and burns, can occur with every laser currently available, and may lead to either too much or too little pigment remaining in the skin, or raised red scars known as hypertrophic scars and keloids. Any adverse reactions must be properly treated by a highly trained medical professional without delay.

The patient's medical history must also be accessed before any treatment is begun. Complications may occur if the patient has a history of seizures, , or a history of abnormal scarring or herpes simplex. In addition underlying endocrine and hormonal abnormalities must be ruled out in certain patients to ensure that an underlying medical problem is not the cause of the excessive hair the patient would like removed. Certain medications may also affect laser treatment and local changes in skin pigmentation such as due to a tattoo or mole in the treatment area also have to be considered. In fact, even the presence of a tan could cause an adverse reaction. In sum, using lasers to remove hair is a surgical technique which has been appropriately determined to be a "medical" procedure by the Connecticut Medical Examining Board and should be performed by a licensed physician or nurse under their direction. The removal of hair by laser should in no way be compared to the removal of hair by electrolysis, which affects a single hair follicle at a time and does not require the sophisticated medical knowledge, required before one should be allowed to use a laser.

In my testimony I have attached some graphic pictures of some of the complications from laser hair removal procedures for your review and some brief descriptions of the various types of lasers on the market today, so that you can better understand lasers and how they can significantly vary from one model to the next. Thank you for your attention. I welcome any questions at this time.



American Academy of Dermatology and AAD Association

Position Statement

on

The Practice of Cutaneous Medicine

(Approved by the Board of Directors February 22, 2002
Amended by the Board of Directors July 23, 2005)

The practice of cutaneous medicine includes, but is not limited to diagnosis, treatment, or correction of human conditions, ailments, diseases, injuries, or infirmities of the skin, hair, nails and mucous membranes, by any means, methods, devices, or instruments.

The practice of cutaneous medicine includes, but is not limited to, performing any act or procedure that, by its intended or improper use, can alter or cause biologic change or damage living tissue. Living tissue is any layer below the dead cell layer (stratum corneum) of the epidermis. The epidermis, below the stratum corneum, and dermis are living tissue layers.

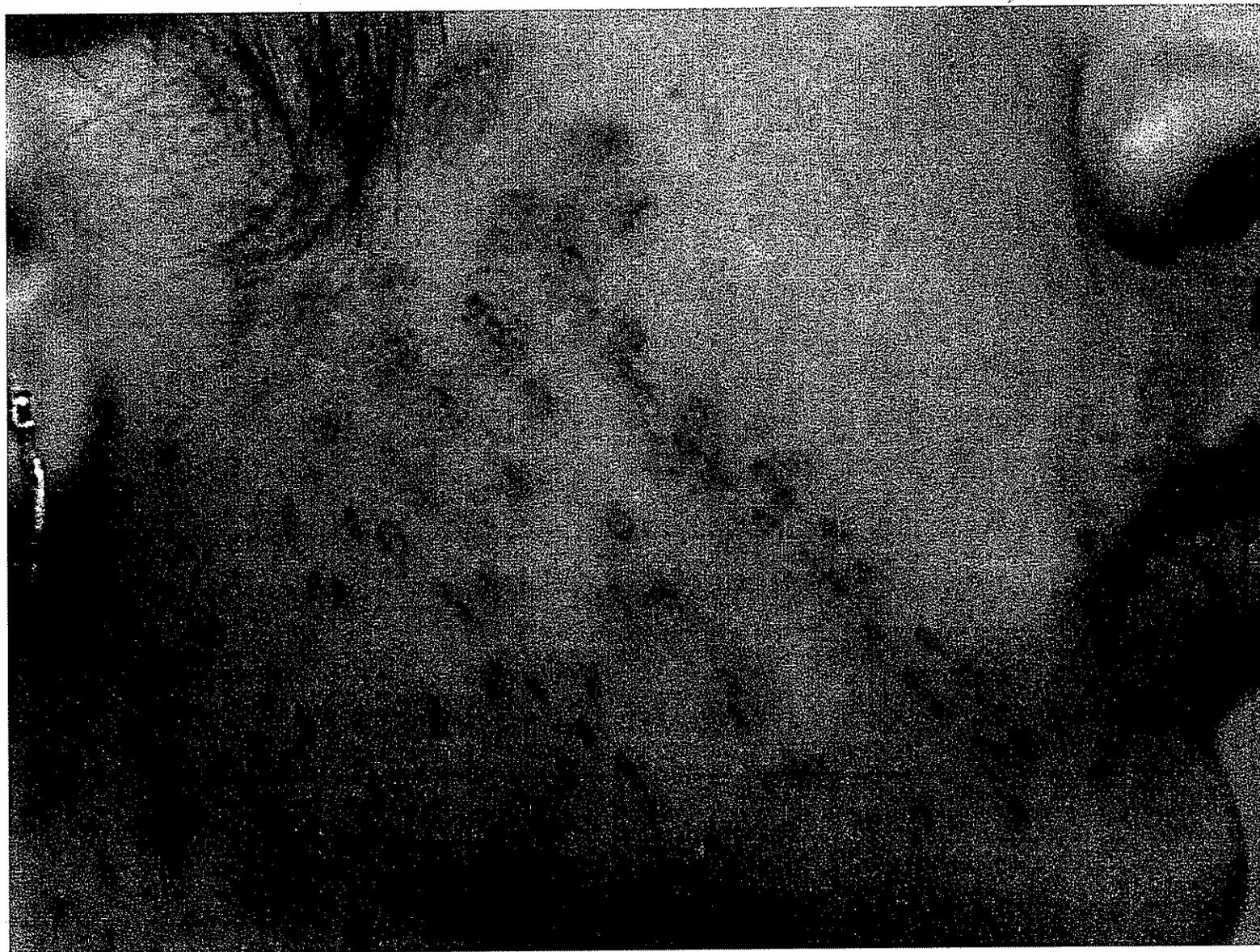
Such acts or procedures include, for example, the use of all lasers, light sources, microwave energy, electrical impulses, chemical application, particle sanding, the injection or insertion of foreign or natural substances, or soft tissue augmentation.

Because certain FDA-approved Class I and II devices, by their intended or improper use, can alter or cause biologic change or damage below the stratum corneum their use constitutes the practice of cutaneous medicine, which should be performed only by a physician or an appropriately trained person under the direct supervision of a physician.

This Position Statement is intended to offer physicians guidelines regarding the delegation of performance of medical procedures, but is not intended to establish a legal standard of care. Physicians should use their personal and professional judgment in interpreting these guidelines and applying them to the particular circumstances of their individual practice arrangements.



burns - face - laser.jpg



Burn1a.jpg

